

Blaxhall Village Newsletter



Spring 2024

Two Welcome Sights



I know what you're thinking, it's a little late for a "spring" anything, but as I type these words Springwatch is on the TV beside me, so if it's good enough for the BBC ...

I could also point out that the weather certainly hasn't been very spring-like, though fingers crossed it will be improving by the time some of you read this. One of the real reasons for holding off on this edition is that we wanted to get information in about the upcoming Festival and Summer Ball, both of which have only just been finalised. Both should be well-worth looking forward to, and we have all the details inside. There's also the latest from BCOST, an update on the pub situation, news about our brilliant new swings and the latest on the roads.

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Festival Time Cometh ...

"What's On" up the Church this Year!

1st of June, but is it really the first day of Summer??? Well, things can only get better and they will, because...drumroll...it's time for the BLAXHALL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL! Aka St Peter's Festival and my absolute favourite time of year! You will see from the poster that we have even more going on than usual and that you will need at least a day to take it all in! And at least 2 days to eat all the cake!! But first here's a message from our Entertainments Impresarios Karoline and Thom:

"Listen up! Throughout the festival weekend there is a wide variety of ukuleles and a cappella performances.

Saturday features traditional English folk tunes played by Harbour Lights at lunchtime, and Heartbeat's a cappella singers early afternoon. There will also be soloists in the church including the voices of Margaret Paine, Rosy Thornton and Lorraine Woolnough interspersed with bird-themed poetry and extracts from Rosy Thornton's 'Sandlands', read by Thom Maltby and Karoline Newman.

Sunday's programme highlights include a fun ukulele performance by The Strumming Birds; Smooth Duets playing clarinet and piano; the evocative sound of Kathy Feakes' flute, and Ruth Gitsham's lovely singing voice. There will be new poetry by Lesley Cresswell, and recitals of longstanding favourites by Charlie Haylock, Thom Maltby and Karoline Newman."

A new community initiative, the brainchild of Thom Maltby, is a challenge to encircle the church, holding hands! For this we will need AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE! So, whatever you are doing that weekend, please come and make a real Circle of Friendship around the church at 3.30 on Sunday. It would be wonderful to see as many people as possible from the whole village.

Of course, there will be the lovely plants to buy from "Katie's Garden", delicious ploughman's lunches and yummy cake and Angie has a Merlinish TREASURE HUN^T planned for the young and young at heart!



One of the window arrangements from 2019
When our theme was "Children's Books"



Village Hall & Playing Field

Six months after the removal of most of the play equipment on the playing field we now have our new swing set, which is already proving very popular.

The previous equipment was deemed unsafe and had to be removed and the grant funding we were pursuing pre covid was no longer available to us. We therefore decided to fund the project ourselves with the monies raised from our ever popular Christmas party, summer ball and fete. We also secured £750 from Sizewell C neighbourhood fund, which we were very grateful for.

Fundraising will now continue for further improvements.

Summer Ball

The ball will be on 22nd June, we have persuaded 'Remoras' to return as they provided such a great atmosphere last year.

Tickets are selling fast so make sure you get them soon as we won't be selling any after 15th June. To reserve yours ring me on 688192.

Graham

Parish Council

Roads and Flooding

In the last newsletter I reported the progress the Parish Council had made with local farmers and both County and District Councils, with positive action promised by all. The results have been better than ever expected. Most of you will have seen the amount of work done to the ditches. This was funded by Warings and New Shoots and carried out by Derek Keeble. This included work which is the responsibility of the County Council but for which they don't have the funds, so I hope you will join the Parish Council in saying a huge thank you to all concerned for their help to the community.

The County Council has managed to find funds to clean out the ditch near the Motocross and although not very deep, it will help alleviate the flooding there.

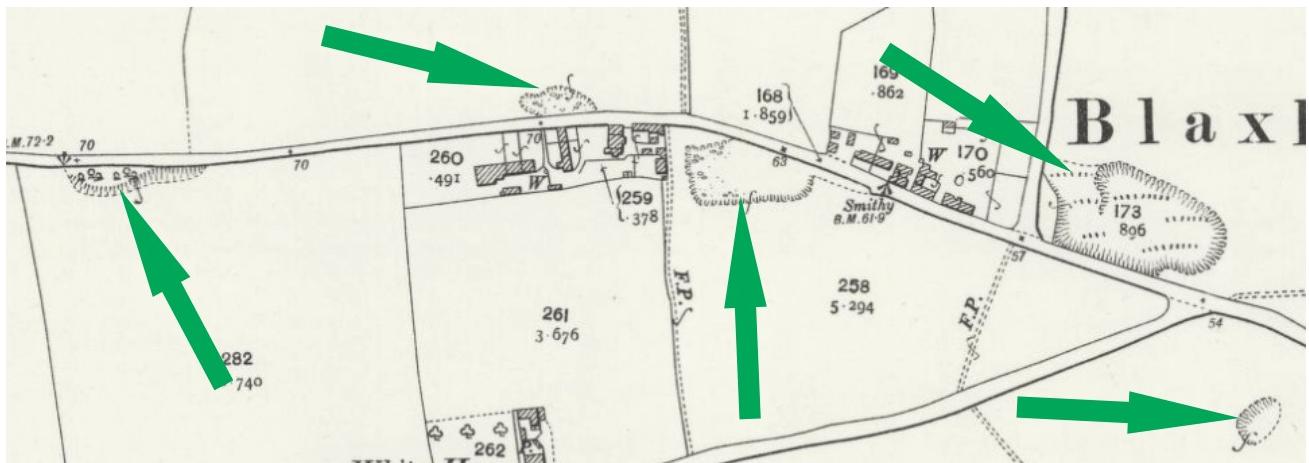
New Shoots have already put in place a programme for moving field entrances and improving others, work to be carried out later in the year.

All in all we should see an improvement to our flood mitigation and every one concerned have ahead to a further meeting to keep on top of it.

Graham

It's the Pits ...

Some of our newer residents will probably not be aware of it, but not so long ago Blaxhall was pockmarked with former sand quarries. The largest and last to close was behind the Old Rectory. It ceased operations some 65 years ago, before becoming home to the motocross track. A quick glance at various maps reveals at least 20 that were still in use or still extant in the



mid 20th century, mainly as large, overgrown pits, but also as the odd pond and even the village dump. The map above shows five within one small area. The largest,(173896) swallowed up everything from cars to cookers in the 1970s, whilst the one top-centre was

Blaxhall Summer Ball

Saturday 22nd June at 7:30pm
in the Village Hall

Dancing to The Remoras

Tickets £16 - Includes
spiffing buffet supper
Licensed Bar (cash only)

Tickets in advance only, by 15 June
from Graham 688192 or 07747 023995



History

rather more appealing, hosting sand martins into the 1980s, not to mention boys on BMX's. The large rectangular one just south of the road was converted to a play area in the 1950s, complete with swings, slide and even an old tractor. By the 1980s it was heavily overgrown and long since disused, but the equipment was still there if you were brave enough to go on safari!

One of the deeper examples was behind Lime Tree Farm. I remember very cautiously emptying barrow fulls of garden waste from the rim as a 10 or 12 year-old, but perhaps someone could tell us if it's still there today?



BLAXHALL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL



29 & 30 June



This year's theme is

British Birds

Over the weekend St Peter's church will be filled with splendid flower arrangements inspired by our feathered friends, accompanied by live music, readings and poetry, a display of watercolours by avian artist Ian Longhurst; a sale of plants from Katie's Garden centre; expert wildlife tours, children's games and, of course, Blaxhall's famous ploughman's lunches, teas and cakes.

Sunday will also see us attempt a circle of friendship, linking hands around the entire church!



BCOST Update

Our AGM in the village hall on 13 April was well attended, and those present enjoyed an entertaining and informative talk about barn owls by speakers from Barn Owl Support Suffolk. We are very grateful to Marianne and Richard Sheldrick, who came to the AGM and have generously pledged to meet the cost of a barn owl nesting box to be put up (once completed) at Stone Common.

We are delighted to welcome on board two new Trustees, Michelle Flowers and Toby Bushill.

Both Toby and Michelle are Stone Common residents and have for some time been active in BCOST work parties there. Grateful thanks are due also to Andrew Derrick and Mike Livesey, who have stood down as Trustees but continue to be involved in BCOST's work.

Work parties were held at Stone Common on 30 March and 28 April. Work was focussed on



the dismantling and removal of redundant fencing and other structures on the land, and cutting back encroaching brambles, Alexanders, etc., especially along Prevost's Path. If you visit Stone Common we hope you will notice things looking a little tidier – but there is still a lot to be done!



Mystery Markings

We've been made aware that two rows of strange markings have appeared on the road near the church. Village elders tell us that similar markings used to be a regular phenomena until around 15 years ago, and often followed an archaic procedure known as "resurfacing". Similar folklore also tells of peculiar sticks at these sites, with phrases such as "Give Way" writ large on a triangle at the top. Personally, I take all such tales with a large pinch of salt.

A Little Bit of Spring

The disappointing weather of April and May has often felt more like that of March, but one happy sign spring is here is to be found at Langham, where a little flotilla of cygnets has arrived.



Ditches

As mentioned by Graham on P3, we have seen considerable progress on the drainage front recently. The battle will, of course, be an ongoing one, but hopefully the worst is now behind us.



News of the Pub

The Parish Council had an extraordinary meeting in April to consider registering The Ship public house as an Asset of Community Value. It was decided unanimously to go forward with the registration. This has now been registered and there is an 8 week consultation period ending on 10th June.

The Blaxhall Ship Inn Community Pub project have commissioned a valuation report on the pub which we hope to have shortly, so the process is continuing, albeit slowly.



Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 885215	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 885115	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Graham Atkinson	01728 687589	Maria Cooke	
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)	Tom Maltby	

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Tim Wilson 07823 587947 tim.wilson@east-suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk

Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2024 dates are: **Wednesday 10th January, Wednesday 6th March, Wednesday 1st May, Wednesday 3rd July, Wednesday 4th September and Wednesday 6th November.**

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938** The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri. You can book a pick-up with “Katch” bus service by using the app, or by phoning **01728 554455**.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org
For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley 01728 687507

The **Mobile Library** comes to Blaxhall, and stops at **The Youth Hostel 9.35 – 10am** calling every 4 weeks on Wednesdays: the remaining 2024 dates are; **29 May, 25 June, 24 July, 20 August, 17 September, 15 October, 12 November, 10 December**

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge.
Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson on help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, visit the website <http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192
To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 885215

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916, Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com

Tree Warden - Joy Shaw, joyjoyshaw@gmail.com, 01728 688309

Previous newsletters can be found online at issuu.com/blaxhall

Newsletter Contact shane@blaxhall.com

Deadline for next Newsletter - 15th August